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ABSTRACT

The paper synthesizes findings from four national studies (conducted 1982-1985) in personnel training in special education. The studies included two national surveys of manpower needs and programmatic implications, a study of a national sample of higher education departments of special education, and a survey of undergraduate and graduate students in special education teacher training programs. Results are examined in terms of three issues: (1) the characteristics and work preferences of preservice special education students (the typical preservice special education student is female, Caucasian, and a public high school graduate); (2) preparation of quality personnel (nearly half of the faculty members reported a decline in student quality over the previous 5 years); and (3) the external influences on teacher preparation in special education (there was a reported lack of communication between faculty and state education agency personnel). Implications noted include the importance of advising students of career options, examining the content of course offerings as well as the sequence of courses for students returning for graduate school, and promoting cooperation between college and university faculty and the state education agency. (CL)

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ISSUES AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS ON THE TRAINING OF SPECIAL EDUCATORS: A SYNTHESIS OF FOUR NATIONAL STUDIES

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Introduction

Beginning in the early 1980's educational excellence became an important item on the policy agendas of state governments, as well as the focus of numerous task forces and commissions. The publication of the National Commission on Excellence in Education's report, "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform" (1983) began a spate of reports, task forces, and conferences addressing the quality of schools and schooling. The continuing activities centered on the issue of education testify to the depth of concern among business leaders, state government officials, and the general public, and the intensity of this effort has catapulted the excellence movement into a reform movement. Guided by the belief that teacher quality is a primary factor in the academic attainment of students, a major focus of the reform movement is teachers and the institutions of higher education providing teacher training.

Preparation of special educators, while not a central issue, has been included within the reform movement because it is under the same governance structure as regular education and, therefore, must conform to the new policies. One of the major concerns of special educators today should be the appropriateness of the reform measures to special education teachers and specifically teacher education. However, in order to consider the appropriateness of the policies to the special education field, current information is required regarding the characteristics of who is becoming

a special educator as well as knowledge of the content of training programs and the match of this content to service delivery needs in local school districts. Armed with such knowledge, special educators can provide decision-makers with information and insights to assure teacher quality by strengthening teacher training programs in special education, as well as policies that influence or shape such training.

For the past three years the Institute for the Study of Exceptional Children and Youth (ISECY) at the University of Maryland through a grant from the Office of Special Education Programs, U. S. Department of Education, has conducted research in the area of personnel training in special education. The research studies have included two studies of manpower supply and demand, a national survey of students in special education teacher training programs, and a study of the content and structure of teacher training programs. These studies have examined different facets of personnel preparation from the perspective of students, faculty, and state education agency personnel.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: First, to present a synthesis of the findings across the four studies, and second, to identify and discuss programmatic and policy implications for special education personnel preparation programs. The three issue areas are: 1) The characteristics and the work preferences of preservice special education students; 2) The preparation of quality personnel; 3) The

external influences on special education teacher preparation.

Description of the Studies

Four separate studies were conducted during the period from 1982-1985. These included a national survey of manpower needs and programmatic implications conducted in 1982 and a follow-up study in 1984, a study of a national sample of higher education departments of special education, and a survey of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in special education teacher training programs.

The two manpower surveys: "Personnel to Educate the Handicapped in America: Supply and Demand from a Programmatic Viewpoint," (Smith-Davis, Noel, & Burke, 1984) and "Personnel to Educate the Handicapped in America: A Status Report" (Noel, Smith-Davis, & Burke, in press) sought to identify trends in actual and projected needs for special education classroom personnel and programmatic implications of these needs. The purpose of the 1982 survey was to determine the status of selected special education issues for each of the 50 state education agencies and four educational jurisdictions (District of Columbia, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands). The follow-up survey, conducted in 1984, sought to identify changes that had occurred over the two-year period since the original survey. For the follow-up survey the Trust Territories (Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana

islands) were included for a total of 57 state education agencies represented in the study.

Both studies involved telephone interviews with representatives from the division of special education within the state education agency for each of the 50 state educational jurisdictions and Trust Territories. A total of 63 individuals were interviewed for the follow-up survey because, in some cases, interviewers were referred to others who could provide specific answers to the survey questions.

The same interview protocol was used for both studies and included questions organized around eight topical areas or sequences. Questions were open-ended to encourage discussion of other relevant issues. The eight sequences included among others, questions concerning certification policies and school reform legislation, manpower supplies and their relationship to licensure and quality assurance, and perceptions of teacher preparation programs. All interview data were categorized first within the major question areas and then further analyzed and reduced. Content was then reduced and summarized across categories and compared across time.

The student survey, "Summary Report of a 1985 Survey of Special Education Students" (Spence, Noel, & Boyer-Schick, 1985), gathered data from a sample of students enrolled in special education during the spring semester of 1985. A two-stage sampling strategy was developed to survey students for the study. First, using enrollment data for institutions

of higher education (IHEs) offering a special education teacher training program, a stratified proportional random sampling procedure was used to select 158 programs. Second, to account for the disparity in the enrollment size of the programs, the 158 programs were divided into quartiles. The maximum number of students needed from each undergraduate and graduate program ranged from 10 students in programs in Quartile I, to 100 students in programs in Quartile IV.

In order to distribute surveys to students, the chairperson of each of the 158 special education programs was personally contacted to request permission and assistance in the distribution process. The Chair was asked to distribute the surveys to undergraduate students in a pre-practicum class or an upper-level methods class, and to graduate students who were at the second semester or above.

The survey instrument used in the student survey was adapted from an instrument developed by Joyce, Morra, and Kuuskraa (1975) for the "National Survey of the Preservice Preparation of Teachers." Selected questions were added and wording was modified to obtain information specific to special education. The instrument was piloted in undergraduate and graduate classes at the University of Maryland, and as a result of the pilot minor modifications were made. The final questionnaire contained three types of questions: Basic Background Information (age, sex, and ethnic representation), Educational Background Information (high school, previous college experience, and finanacial

resources available to meet college expenses), and Career Plans (preferred teaching situation, plans to pursue a career in special education, and to pursue graduate training).

A total of 2307 students, representing 63 percent of the sample, from the 148 programs surveyed responded (Undergraduate = 1414, Graduate = 893). Descriptive statistics were used to provide information regarding the characteristics of the sampled students.

The higher education study, "Determinants of Teacher Training Preparation: A Study of Departments of Special Education," (Noel, Valdivieso, & Fuller, 1985) used a qualitative methodology involving semi-structured, face-to-face and telephone interviews with an accompanying sets of scales to explore the various aspects of teacher preparation programs. Of particular interest were the factors that influence the content and structure of the training programs. A total of 68 interviews, averaging one-hour in length, were conducted with special education faculty in 25 IHEs in five states representing the North Eastern, Middle Atlantic, Southern, Rocky Mountain, and Western Regions of the country. Faculty were asked to respond to questions in eleven issue areas including descriptions of students, faculty, and departments; training priorities; external and internal influences on the department; philosophies guiding the field; and current problems in the field. In addition, faculty were asked to

complete four Likert-like scales on areas including preferred and actual training priorities, department priorities, desired federal focus, and local education agency emphasis. The data were first categorized under the question areas and then analyzed for similarities and differences in faculty comments and opinions. Analysis of the responses to the Likert scales involved the use of descriptive statistics.

Results of all four studies have been reported separately. However, in analyzing those results it became apparent that there were a number of issues or themes that while independently identified were complementary across studies. Thus, the results of the separate studies were criticaly reassessed and a number of issues identified. The following three issues were selected for discussion because of their current relevance and timeliness, as well as implications for further investigation. These issues represent only selected findings from the four studies.

Issues

Issue Number 1: The Characteristics and the Work Preferences of Preservice Special Education Students.

Characteristics. Results of the student survey indicated that the typical preservice special education student is female, Caucasian, and a graduate of a public

high school. Undergraduates differed from graduates on the time allotted to school and to work. Over 90 percent of the undergraduate students are enrolled full-time, with almost half holding part-time jobs, while 57 percent of the graduate sample attend school part-time and 43 percent have full-time jobs. Responses indicate that the majority of the graduate students appear to be following a career path in teaching as 32 percent have a Bachelor's degree in special education while 29 percent have a degree in regular education.

The student survey data regarding sex and ethnic characteristics of special education majors indicate that special education is becoming an even more Caucasian, female dominated occupation than in the past. Fewer than eight percent of the undergraduate trainees sampled in the student survey were males compared to 16 percent reported in a national survey conducted a decade ago (Joyce, Howey, Yarger, Harbeck, & Kluwin, 1977). This low percentage was confirmed by the higher education study in which the majority of faculty noted that there have been fewer males in their classes over the past five or six years with one exception: Early Childhood programs which formerly had no male students now have a small number of males enrolled.

In terms of minority representation, fewer than nine percent of the students sampled self-identified as a racial or ethnic minority. Specifically, four percent were black and two percent were Hispanic. In addition, there was a

marked lack of minority enrollments in special education in the 25 institutions of higher education (IHEs) visited, despite the fact that half of these programs were located in areas with a 48 to 83 percent minority representation in their adjacent local public school systems. Only six programs reported having a 10 to 15 percent minority enrollment which included part-time graduate students. Thus, indications are that the percentage of minority representation in special education training programs is below that of their representation in the population at large of 11.7 percent for blacks and 6.4 for Hispanics (U.S. Census, 1980).

Faculty members interviewed in the higher education study noted that one of the most significant changes in the characteristics of students enrolled in teacher training programs over the past five or six years has been the shift from full-time to part-time graduate study. As indicated earlier, the student survey revealed that part-time graduate students outnumbered those attending full-time. In addition, a high percentage of these students intend to assume or maintain a direct service role as either a classroom teacher (51%) or consultant/specialist (36%) even though they are seeking graduate training and advanced degrees.

Work Preferences. Students responding to the student survey were asked to indicate the type of teaching situation such as type of community, school, student, and classroom organization they preferred. The responses of both

undergraduate and graduate students would appear not to match the realities of present job market. For example:

1. Fifty-six percent of the students sampled would prefer to teach in a self-contained classroom. Data from the Seventh Annual Report to Congress (U.S. Department of Education, 1985), as well as a national survey conducted by Algozzine, Schmid and Wells (1982) indicate that the majority of the handicapped are educated in resource rooms or similar part-time placements.

2. Fifty-eight percent of the students sampled would prefer to teach at the elementary level. Data indicate that the major program expansions and teacher shortages are occurring at the secondary level (Grosnick & Huntze, 1980; Smith-Davis et al., 1984; U.S. Department of Education, 1985).

3. Fifty-nine percent of the students sampled would prefer to teach learning disabled (LD) students. Among all the disability areas, the area of LD is beginning to show teacher surpluses, particularly in surburban and other "desirable" communities.

Given this data, it is unlikely that all students will be able to teach in their preferred setting. Conflicts between job expectations and actual employment availability could cause teacher "burnout." However, it is questionable whether prospective teachers will be willing to accept teaching positions in other settings and be satisfied with the job.

Even more important is the fact that 58 percent of the students indicated they felt confident that their training had adequately prepared them to teach handicapped students; yet, it is uncertain that their training is adequate to cover all the areas they may be required to teach under the multicategorical certification.

Issue 2: The Preparation of Quality Personnel.

The preparation of quality personnel was addressed in both the higher education and the manpower studies. In the higher education study faculty members were asked: "How has the composition of your students in special education changed over the past 5 years?" Almost half reported a decline in student quality over that time period. Although almost no faculty had the actual scores, a wide range of SAT scores was reported by the faculty across the IHEs. The combined scores were reported to range from 400 to 1200. In addition, six of the 25 IHE programs reportedly maintained close contact with the remedial skills center at their institutions and worked cooperatively to upgrade the skills of students. One special education program reported recruiting many of their students from the school's remedial skills center.

It should be noted, however, that when faculty were critical of the quality of students entering their programs, most were quick to add that their students demonstrated interest and commitment to teaching handicapped students.

Faculty also believed that their programs trained students to be technically competent teachers. One faculty member nicely summarized the statements of others:

> I think I can compare them favorably with students I've seen in a fifth year masters' program in a lot of places, technically, but not necessarily cognitively. A lot of our students are not, and probably will not be, graduate school material intellectually. They have very large hearts, a good level of sensitivity, and enough cognitive skills--strong enough cognitive skills to enable them to handle the intellecual challenges it takes to be a teacher.

Further substantiating the concerns regarding the quality of new personnel were the comments of state education agency representatives surveyed. Among the 57 jurisdictions surveyed only nine had no concerns about personnel quality or were not aware of any concerns at the local level. Representatives from the remaining 48 jurisdictions expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the students graduating from special education teacher training programs. Complaints about skills of new teachers centered on areas such as assessment, collaboration with regular educators, behavior management or classroom control, and writing individualized education plans (IEPs). The SEA representatives did not fault the teachers per se; they did fault the IHE training programs for failing to teach the

students the skills necessary for the day-to-day survival in local schools. IHEs were considered unresponsive to state identified training needs or priority areas addressed in the state Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) plans. The following quotes from SEA representatives illustrate the reactions of the SEAs to higher educations' training programs:

> The main difficulties in the teachers is in relation to doing their P.L. 94-142 paperwork in an expeditious manner. There is too much paperwork (but) it would be a great favor to personnel if they could be prepared to handle it with less time consumed.

> There is a lot of criticism from districts about preservice training. New graduates lack knowledge of state rules and regulations, eligibility criteria, writing IEPs, working on teams and communication.

> Preservice falls on the IEP, inservice is providing the training, particularly in writing goals and objectives. New graduates seem unable to distinguish the two or otherwise deal with IEPs.

> The institutions of higher education don't train what we need. For example, they train

> students to do lesson plans not IEPs, so we have to train them. We're looking at a 5th-year internship at the local district level to give new graduates the needed skills; they're not finished products when they graduate.
>
> We have some real concerns about the skills of new personnel...

Certainly, specific SEA actions also relate to the issue of the mismatch between preservice training and job market realities. For example, some states have moved toward, and others are contemplating, generic or cross categorical certification which may increase the availability of teachers, but may negatively impact teacher quality. Approximately 50 percent of the states have some type of generic or cross-categorical certification allowing teachers to instruct learning disabled, mildly mentally retarded, and behaviorally disordered students. Yet, according to SEA representatives local special education directors have expressed concerns that many of the teachers placed in cross-categorical classrooms are unable to deal with the behaviorally disordered child as well as the child with more significant cognitive deficits.

The question to be asked, in light of these criticisms, is: "What is the content of the teacher training programs at institutions of higher education?" In the higher education study faculty were asked to indicate on a Likert

scale (1=low; 2=average; and 3=high) the level of emphasis they thought their department placed on 13 competencies considered typical in special education teacher preparation programs, and to indicate on a second scale, using the same list of competencies, the level of emphasis they would place on each of the competencies. The competencies perceived as "emphasized most" (rated 3=high) within training programs were: "classroom behavior management" (67%), and "assessment techniques" (69%). The items that received the highest "personal emphases" rating by faculty were "communication with regular educators and related service disciplines" (80%), "learning theory"(77%), and "assessment techniques" (77%).

There was a consistent pattern for "personal emphases" ratings to be higher than "department emphases" ratings for each of the 13 competency areas. The least discrepant item was "special education law and mandates" which the faculty considered to be of high importance (69%) but which their training programs also highly emphasized (59%). The three competencies having the greatest discrepancies in their ratings were "vocational and career education," which faculty members thought to be important (43%), but was not highly emphasized by departments (15%). However, most faculty believed that their departments would probably emphasize the area if there were the additional money and available personnel. The second discrepant competency was "conducting and using research" which 43 percent of the

faculty, younger faculty in particular, considered important as a means for teachers to keep abreast of current best practices. The third discrepant area was "learning theory" which 77 percent of the faculty, especially those with more teaching experience, thought was important, but was considered to have lost its emphasis in over a third of the departments in recent years. This area was highly emphasized by only 17 percent of the departments. Even though faculty thought learning theory was important, they agreed that due to the already overloaded student programs something had to go. Many said they included the substance of learning theory in the content of the other courses.

Among the more prevalent comments made by faculty were those related to feelings of frustration while trying to develop a program that would meet all the state certification requirements, the courses required by the IHEs for graduation, and the courses necessary for a program major. It was not unusual for a faculty member to say that an area really should have a full course devoted to it, but due to the restrictions of credit hours and general education requirements, the topic had to be spread across several courses and instructors. State certification requirements and concomitant increases in practica hours consumed credit hours, and programs were reluctant to increase requirements to include additional training for fear of losing or not attracting students.

Issue Number 3: The external influences on teacher preparation in special education.

Federal Influences. Since the 1958 enactment of P.L. 85-926 authorizing money for the training of teachers of the mentally retarded, the federal government has provided funds to support teacher training. This commitment is evident in Part D of The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 94-142, as well as the Comprehensive Service Personnel Development (CSPD) provisions of the Law. The CSPD provision requires that states provide needs-based training for both special and regular education teachers and provide funds to support this effort. The Part D discretionary monies have supported training programs for all types of personnel who work with the handicapped.

The federal influence is but one external influence on departments. However, because special education has received substantial amounts of federal funds to support its teacher training programs, it is logical to assume that the federal government would be perceived as playing a direct role in shaping teacher training programs. The federal government's attempts to influence policy or practice in special education are articulated in the priorities established for funding new or emerging program areas, including those in teacher training. This mechanism has been primarily responsible for the development and maintenance of training programs in low incidence areas, such as severely handicapped or sensory handicapped, which have been

expensive for the IHEs to operate because of their small class enrollments.

The information regarding external influences on teacher training programs comes primarily from the higher education survey but is supported by data obtained from the manpower surveys. In terms of federal influence, some faculty indicated that their own position was a direct result of a federal priority; however, few said federal priorities had really shaped the "core" training program at their college or university. Instead, federal grants were perceived as providing the funds to expand or broaden the "core" program into other areas considered important to meet local districts' service delivery needs such as early childhood, vocational education, or the severely handicapped. The decision to apply for a training grant under a federal priority was usually made at the discretion of the individual faculty. Among those faculty who frequently wrote grants to secure federal funds, the perception was that grants provided funding and time to pursue individual research interests that would add to or otherwise supplement a core program.

The availability of federal funds, specifically support for full-time students such as assistantships and stipends, was mentioned by faculty members as one of the most positive benefits and influences of federal grant monies. Faculty reported that full-time graduate students enriched programs, particularly in the areas of conducting research. Without

these students the special education program was seen as reduced to a mechanical, technical training program and general morale within the departments sank. The feelings of many were well stated by one chairperson:

> At one time we had 15 or 16 full-time graduate students around; they were a cadre of people who identified themselves as '[name of institution]' students, and they were proud of it. They kept you on your toes. It was stimulating, and I think I miss that most of all (now that we don't have grants to support them).

With few exceptions, faculty did not perceive that their programs changed in response to the availability of federal funds; and in general they viewed the federal influences as positive. In essence, the relationship between the IHEs and the federal government is neither reactive, nor proactive. It is more characteristic of a balance of "power" between the federal government and the profession it helped create and nurture.

State Influences. State education agency influence appears much more pervasive in training programs. The SEAs control the licensing of new personnel and these certification requirements exert what seems to be the primary external influence on program content. Because a training program that does not yield a teaching certificate for its graduates is unlikely to survive, IHEs must be responsive to their state's certification requirements. By

and large, certification policies determine whether programs will be categorical or non-categorical, undergraduate or graduate, and competency based.

Yet, despite the reported responsiveness of IHEs to their respective states certification requirements, representatives from these SEAs still express dissatisfaction with higher education training programs. A comment expressed by about one-fourth of those interviewed in the manpower surveys was that IHEs did not respond to the specific manpower needs within their respective states. For example, some states report that they are unable to develop new programs for seriously emotionaly distrubed students because teachers for these students are not being prepared in their training programs. In addition, as noted earlier under the issue pertaining to quality, SEAs are dissatifled with the skill level of new personnel who are entering the profession.

The response of the SEAs to concerns regarding quality and quantity of personnel has been to revise regulations governing licensure, to increase requirements for quality, and to decrease requirements in order to increase supply. A notable example of state regulatory power is the rash of school reform legislation which almost uniformly contains language pertaining to certification and moves further toward eroding higher education's control over entry into the profession and program content. State representatives talk of the need to "retrain" special education teachers and

to provide extensive inservice in local districts to ensure that new teachers' skills match local programs, while IHEs feel put upon, ignored, and feel that SEAs are not concerned with quality.

The IHE faculty describe their relationship with their SEA as one of love/hate. On one hand a change in credentialling requirements forces students to return to school for certification or additional credits. This results in revenues and increased enrollments for programs, and for several of the small schools included in the study, it meant survival. At the same time certification changes can wreak havoc on programs. In one state included in the higher education study, each of the seven programs visited indicated that it had taken them over three years to make the necessary curricula changes following the last certification change in their state. In this state faculty reported that they were relieved to finally refocus on their teaching activities again. As one faculty member summarized:

> Responding to teacher credentialling and pressures is the bane of my existence, especially with the new changes, which we find obstructive. We really would like to direct our energies elsewhere, but we can't.

Faculty perceive that the influence of the state education agency is intrusive in the area of program content. In fact, what emerged from the higher education study and the manpower survey is that content is a major

area of conflict between the IHEs and the SEAs. In short, higher educations' programs are perceiving themselves as more reactive to state regulation and less able to design their own programs, and SEAs feel that training programs are not responding to the personnel needs of the local schools.

Clearly what emerged from the interviews with faculty and with SEA representatives was a distinct impression of a lack of communication between the two parties. Several individuals from both camps stated that "they don't listen to us." Yet, when faculty were asked how, or in what ways they communicated with their SEA, with only four exceptions, the interactions were limited to or heavily focused on the Division of Certification--not the Division of Special Education.

Generally, faculty consider themselves powerless in the face of state credentialling requirements. According to faculty, the local districts exert control on the SEA to establish certifications to meet their needs and IHE faculty receive little notice. One of the more cogent remarks regarding te SEA's position was made by one faculty:

> There is a fundamental conflict of interest whenever you have a state department of education responsible for certification of teachers. The state is responsible for both the quality of teachers and the supply of teachers, and those two factors come into conflict. When supply is low enormous pressures occur to waive requirements.

The pervasive feeling among faculty interviewed was that training programs are determined by state licensing requirements and that their aim was not always to establish quality standards. The state itself is seen as acquiescing to political expediency and demands from local district superintendents. For example, one faculty member commented that:

> Rural superintendents are the ones most opposed to increased specialization and more narrow certification. What it allows them to do is hire cheaper teachers. This is my perception: They are looking at it from a purely economic point of view, not a programmatic point of view. But the state listens to them!

As a further illustration of this dilemma, one state education agency requested that an IHE in their state begin an undergraduate program in a particular specialty area because there was a shortage of trained teachers in the state, and districts needed teachers fast and "cheap." The program faculty were against the idea of an undergraduate level program, but succumbed to pressure from the state. Small programs, private and public, depend on the good will of the state for survival and believe that they must respond, or at least not "buck the system." As one individual said in response to a question about how higher education could influence the state:

> Frankly, I don't think we'd know what to do with power if we had it. We don't use the power we have. We have

never done anything to embarrass the state officials, which we could do. We have the power of knowledge and a certain amount of reputation with the public. One of the jobs of the university is to keep a watchdog eye on these things, and we have almost been seduced by the public schools and the SEA. We have courted them because they have something we want--program approval, and the faculty wants to be called on to do occasional consultation...If they [the SEA] got embarrasssed two or three times, they would get mad, and they would start to listen, and they wouldn't just brush you off as they do now.

Implications

A number of policy and program implications were considered and discussed based on both the results from the individual studies as well as the cross-cutting isssues presented in this paper. The following implications were developed because of their relevance to current policy revisions in education and other recent events regarding the reform of teacher education.

Implication Number 1: What are the characteristics of students?

We believe that the data indicate a growing imbalance between the growth in minority enrollments in the public schools and the decline in minority enrollments in special education teacher training programs. This poses particular problems in urban areas where special education programs enroll large numbers of minorities. Training programs should increase their efforts to recruit and prepare prospective teachers to meet the demands posed by students and parents who have culturally diverse backgrounds. In addition, considering that only one-fourth of the students sampled indicated a preference to teach in urban communities, these school districts are at a definite disadvantage in recruiting and retaining qualified graduates. Given the current low level of involvement of faculty in this recruitment process, as one possible suggestion, individual special education departments should consider working with

local school districts to actively recruit minority students into special education teacher training programs and encourage prospective teachers to seek positions in urban districts. The finding that almost half of all students sampled attended a teacher training program within 50 miles of home indicates that those programs located in or near large urban communities are in the best position to recruit students from minority groups.

Looking at the job preferences of students it is clear that they are "out of sync" with the current job market. Whether the preferences of the students sampled are entirely personal statements or reflect their training experiencies was not possible to determine. Nonetheless, the effects of the mismatch of teacher job satisfaction and future rates of burnout and attrition are reason for concern. Again it would appear that IHE faculty are in the best position to advise students of their career options and help them find a satisfactory match of their teaching skills and opportunities in the job market.

Implication Number 2: What is the meaning of graduate education?

Data from the student survey point to the growing number of part-time graduate students returning to school because their job requires graduate training, or they are seeking certification, or desire to gain more skill and knowledge in managing handicapped students. However, even

with graduate training these students indicate that they intend to continue their teaching careers as either a classroom teacher or as a consultant/specialist. Despite the fact that the faculty interviewed confirmed this trend, special education training programs still adhere to a traditional full-time training model in which graduate level courses are usually seminars which emphasize reading, critiquing research, and developing writing skills. How relevant are the content and skills developed in these courses to individuals who seem to be career teachers returning to school to refine their instructional skills? Of all the departments and faculty only one acknowledged that there may be a problem with the continued use of this model for teacher training at the graduate level and was interested in developing alternatives. In general, there was a striking lack of alteration in the traditional program structure among the 25 IHEs visited. With the exception of off-campus and evening courses, only four departments reported considering adapting their curriculum, or examining their training sequences and practica experiences to meet the needs of these students.

In light of these findings there appears to be a need to examine the content of the course offerings as well the sequence of courses provided for students coming back to school for graduate study, including a need to include more practica or other direct experiences with students and master teachers. Furthermore, how this can be accomplished

in a part-time program needs to be explored. As a way of assessing the relevance of the training activities, IHEs could survey former students to determine the skills they consider necessary for their jobs, and evaluate the importance of various components of the training programs in relation to these needs. In addition, all incoming students could be assessed in terms of present skill level and actual career goals or job requirements. Also, IHEs need to work to develop ongoing relationships with local education agencies to determine the skill needs of teachers in relation to the local service delivery system, and to give consideration to these needs in designing training activites.

The implications of the increase in part-time graduate students extends to other facets of graduate training. An example is the provision of financial support to students returning for graduate training. Generally, it is the full-time students who are eligible for assistantships and stipends. These financial supports are meager at best and represent a major financial sacrifice for anyone attending school full-time. Can teachers ever hope to recop the money lost during this time and, more importantly, can they risk loosing their jobs while they complete their graduate training for one or two years? Tuition assistantships for part-time students is only one option, others may include providing short-term financial supports that require less sacrifice and still allow a student to be a full-time student for a short period.

The fact that we may be facing the dimise of full-time graduate study raises the issue of the extent to which people are socialized into the field of special education through the part-time model. Can this socialization and identification with the profession only be accomplished, or best accomplished, through the full-time study model? And if so, what does this imply for the future of special education? If not, where are the new models that can accomplish this socializaion and remove the part-time graduate students from step-child status?

Implication Number 3: Who will define quality?

It appears that the term, "quality," is being defined differently by IHEs and SEAs. The skills of the new personnel entering the profession have been questioned by the SEAs. The SEAs are expressing dissatisfaction with what might be called the technical/procedural skills of teachers. These include the ability of teachers to compelete individualized education plans (IEPs), manage student behavior, and to follow due process procedures. The SEAs also want teachers with skills that match the needs of their local education agencies' service delivery system. Thus, with the increased mainstreaming of mildly handicapped students, consultation skills become a priority, specifically those that enable special educators to collaborate with regular educators.

Special education faculty, while not negating the importance of these skills, indicate that their programs emphasize developing assessment skills, lesson plans, and instructional activities. While important, the knowledge of due process procedures and filling out IEP forms are not high priorities in the training curriculum. Thus, it seems there is an inherent conflict in the perceptions of these two parties as to what constitutes a quality teacher, if the SEA definition of quality is adopted, do we risk training technicians, skilled in paperwork, but not in instructional processes.

This dilemma is exacerbated further by the fact that the SEAs say the IHEs don't listen to them when they tell them what they perceive as the training deficits and needs of teachers in the state. Faculty members however, feel they are too reactive and responsive to state needs and credentialling requirements, and their concerns for program quality are disregarded. Clearly, there is a need once again, to attempt to reach agreement on what constitutes a quality special education teacher.

Efforts to develop competency statements and professional standards appear to have had minimal to no influence on defining program standards or credentialling requirements. It's time for IHEs and the public schools to come together to develop on a state-by-state, if not national basis, quality indicators for personnel that can guide preservice and inservice training efforts. Without

such agreement, quality will continue to be subjectively defined and IHEs and SEAs will continue to pursue separate goals.

Implication Number 4: The relationship between IHEs and SEAs.

It appears that a major implication that has emerged from the data is the extensive control of the content of training programs exerted by state regulatory agencies. While federal priorities and federal money shape programs, they are seen as gentle efforts by the IHEs that allow programs to further their own efforts and exercise autonomy with respect to program content. Whether that is correct in fact is questionable given that faculty are quick to acknowledge that they initiated specific training tracks because of the strong federal emphasis. Nonetheless, the influence is seen as benign and supportive.

Faculty do, however, perceive themselves as "victims" of their state education agency, specifically the divisions of certification. This situation appears to be pervasive, not isolated to just one or two states. It suggests that IHE faculty, of necessity, must begin to work more closely with the SEA Division of Special Education personnel since there is not evidence to suggest that the IHE faculty have input into the development of state policies or programs for handicapped students and that issues regarding quality under implication three could be addressed through more ongoing

communication between IHEs and SES divisions of special education. While faculty may have developed professional ties with the certification division within their state education agency, there is a need to work more closely with the division of special education, particularly in the face of new school reform legislation, teacher testing, beginning teacher internships, and other policies that will impact special education teachers. It is imperative that they seek to actively establish a working relationship to identify training needs and develop training programs that will maintain a supply of teachers for the handicapped while at the same time preserve the quality of their personnel.

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